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challenge

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2004 ELECTION RESULTS MEAN:

WORKERS AND SOLDIERS NEED RED POLITICS

From a working-class point of view, the November 2 election reflected both dangers and opportunities. Bush's victory showed that racism and religion remain powerful weapons in the rulers' ideological arsenal. On the one hand, U.S. rulers led millions of workers down the dead-end road of electoral politics. Sixty percent of eligible voters turned out — up from 52% in 2000. But this same figure shows that the capitalists' success is far from complete. The 40% who stayed away from the polls — nearly 80 million people — far outnumber Bush's 59 million votes or Kerry's 56 million. And an unprecedented push to register young workers and students had no significant effect. "An Associated Press exit poll survey found that fewer than 1 in 10 voters…were 18 to 24, about the same proportion of the electorate as in 2000." (San Francisco Chronicle, 11/3) Although class-consciousness today is woefully low, we in PLP must redouble our efforts to win millions of non-voters (as well as many of those who actually voted) away from "choosing" which ruling-class servant is going to oppress us all.

Bush's victory shows that many people have been won to fascist ideas. But a key reason for Kerry's collapse offers encouragement. Many people in the U.S. don't want their children, or themselves, used as the rulers' cannon fodder. Kerry had a mission. His imperialist backers were counting on him to capitalize on the Sept. 11 attacks and U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to begin a thorough militarization of the nation that would ensure the U.S.'s worldwide dominance into the next generation.

The New York Times' endorsement of Kerry demanded that he usher in an era of "shared sacrifice." A program of mandatory, universal national service starting in high school was the cornerstone of Kerry's early campaign. Young people, said Kerry in a May 2003 speech, could choose between the military and fascist homeland security. But when U.S. troop shortages in Iraq made resuming the draft a real possibility, mass hostility erupted.

On October 8, Time magazine reported 64% opposition to the draft. A week later, ABC News said 77% were against it. Kerry had already dropped national service like a hot potato. In the debates and on the campaign trail, Kerry confined himself to the usual Democratic lies about more jobs and better health care. Both candidates wore out stacks of bibles swearing they would never restore the draft. Nearly 60% of the voting pool cast ballots for Bush and Kerry. More than three-fourths, however, are unwilling to let the U.S. war machine waste their sons' and daughters' lives for Exxon Mobil's profits.

Pundits say that the election reflects growing support for the rulers' so-called war on terrorism. Enlistment statistics belie such claims. "The Army Research Institute projects that only 27% of Guard and Reserve soldiers intend to re-enlist — an all-time low. The Army National Guard fell nearly 10% short of its 2004 recruiting goal of 56,000 enlistees. In addition, many former soldiers mobilized under a special program have refused to report; they've been to Iraq and don't want to return. The pool of young people who have committed to join the Army next year is only 18% of the total required." (Minneapolis Star-Tribune, 10/22)

Tens of millions of people — mostly working-class — fear Bush's brand of war and fascism. But millions more, certainly among the tens of millions who voted for Kerry, don't necessarily see through his version of war and fascism. They still have the illusion that somehow the Democrats can make things "right." The millions of non-voters are not, at this point, a threat to the ruling class. Opposing the draft, and telling military recruiters to shove it, are all to the good. But lasting change won't come until masses of workers and rank-and-file soldiers do, in fact, embrace politics — revolutionary communist politics — and build a party that will eventually crush capitalism. That's the goal of the Progressive Labor Party.✪

Union Hacks Opened Door For Bush Re-Election

Much has been said about the backwardness of workers who voted for Bush. They've been called religious nuts, racist idiots and even Nazis. Indeed, many of them are reactionary. But why do workers in Ohio, West Virginia, Iowa and other "red" states vote for "moral values" while seeing their jobs and standard of living go down the drain? Before the elections, a CHALLENGE article on Ohio provided a partial answer: the Democrats and their union hack lieutenants offered no real alternative.

If the AFL-CIO in all its factions (from its president John Sweeney to "dissidents" like SEIU's David Stern) had fought the massive job losses maybe some of these workers wouldn't have been taken in by the Bushites' reactionary ideas. But there was no alternative. Instead the AFL-CIO invested hundreds of millions and used tens of thousands of volunteers to bring out the vote for Kerry and the Democrats, who were basically aping Bush: Kerry wanted 40,000 more troops to "fight terror." Even the "dissident" union leaders' so-called "Million Workers March" was basically an anti-Bush, pro-Democrat rally of a few thousand workers.

Very little energy and resources went to support strikes among San Francisco hotel workers, Southern California grocery workers or home attendant workers in NY, or any other recent working-class struggles. To the contrary, the union leaders have done everything possible to betray and sell out workers in the last 40 years. Where was the labor movement when Reagan busted the striking air controllers' union? Or when Clinton dismantled welfare and imposed slave-labor Workfare, destroying union jobs in NYC and other major "union cities"? Didn't the leaders of the auto, steel, machinists', miners' and other industrial unions make wholesale concessions to the bosses, eliminating hundreds of thousands if not millions of jobs since the 1980s? These hacks have been too busy supporting the U.S. bosses "war against communism" — backing death-squad governments

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Workers vs. Bosses: Only One Class Can Rule

THEORY

(The previous articles in this series have explained the state as the key instrument for maintaining the bosses' dictatorship over the working class and the rest of society. Bush's re-election changes nothing in this analysis. Had Kerry won, the U.S. would also have remained a capitalist dictatorship. Since the reversal of workers' power in the former Soviet Union and Peoples' Republic of China, every state in the world represents the tyranny of the profit system. Workers and their allies must never choose between supposed "lesser evil" bosses. All previous class societies have been a dictatorship of a minority over the overwhelming majority. Our goal remains to smash the capitalist state apparatus root and branch and replace it with a revolutionary communist state: the Dictatorship of the Working Class, the rule of the overwhelming majority who produce all value.)

The state as an instrument of class rule came into existence with the rise of social classes. It will continue to exist as long as they do, because classes reflect a society based on antagonism and therefore the need for organized violence to maintain the ruling class in power. The triumph of communism will also require a state. (The abolition of classes altogether is a topic for future discussion.)

The revolutionary dictatorship that will enable workers to rule society will be a state of a thoroughly different type from any other in history. Firstly, it will represent the dictatorship of the vast majority over a small minority. Secondly, it will eliminate exploitation and profit as the basis for social organization. Socialism in the former Soviet Union and China provided a glimpse of this state, but the communist parties that led those societies committed deadly political errors that transformed the burgeoning workers' dictatorship into its opposite.

The Progressive Labor Party's document, "Road to Revolution IV," summarizes them. The key error involved misunderstanding the crucial need to win workers to fight for communism and misleading them to fight instead for socialism, a halfway house in which revolutionary communist form disguised capitalist content. Now, even the pretense of communist form is long gone in Russia and modern China.

The great communist revolutionary Lenin set the tone for this error as it relates to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his classic work, "State and Revolution," he argued that the state and the communist party should remain two separate entities. Another great revolutionary, Mao Zedong, compounded the error and took it one step further to the right, in his essay "On New Democracy." Where Lenin had argued that the state and the Party were separate, implying therefore that non-communists could participate in a communist state apparatus, Mao openly advocated the concept of the state as an alliance between communists and "progressive" capitalist forces. Antagonistic classes cannot share power. History has exposed the tragic bankruptcy of these positions. Lenin and Mao are titanic figures in the history of our movement, and we say that we stand on their shoulders. But their theory of the state was wrong, and it led to political practices that destroyed the old communist movement and caused our class to suffer the worst defeat in its history. This was not their purpose, but it was the result — we must face facts.

We need to fight for something different. The Progressive Labor Party believes that the overwhelming majority of the world's workers can eventually be won to fight for a communist dictatorship of the proletariat. This will be a long, very difficult process, but it is the only goal worthy of a communist party. Anything less will merely prolong the horrors of the profit system. We must break thoroughly with the fatal illusion that society should be ruled by any other organization than the Party. The working class must not entrust the building of its own society to non-communists. "Democracy" under the profit system permits parties to exist for two reasons: to represent tactical camps among the bosses and to delude workers into marching behind the banners of one or another.

We need to fight for something different. The Progressive Labor Party believes that the overwhelming majority of the world's workers can eventually be won to fight for a communist dictatorship of the proletariat.

Today, tomorrow, forever, in good times and bad, weak or strong, we hold only one banner: the red flag; we fight for only one goal: communism; and we envision only one Party as the instrument of the working class's dictatorship, composed of hundreds of millions of workers.

We understand the grueling, long-range character of the course this grand strategy implies. History has shown that the dictatorship of the proletariat is easier to achieve than to maintain and preserve. It has also shown that the world's bosses will stop at nothing to strangle a fledgling communist state in the cradle. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, every participant in World War I, including the bitterest of capitalist enemies, united to send troops to crush the new Soviet Union, which had freed one-sixth of the world from capitalism. This action failed, but it cost the lives of seven million Soviet soldiers and civilians. Barely a generation later, the imperialists then allowed the defeated German bosses to rearm, giving Hitler the special assignment of wiping out Soviet socialism. Hitler also failed, but not until his hordes had murdered tens of millions more.

We should expect no less brutal a response once we or our successors succeed in establishing a communist state anywhere. When conditions eventually ripen for a revolutionary seizure of power in the United States or any part of the world, we can assume that the process will follow the massive destruction of major warfare, including armed struggle in the region where the revolution is occurring. We can also assume that other imperialists — Chinese, Russian, European, Japanese — will imitate the capitalists after World War I and the bosses who backed Hitler against the Soviet Union in World War II.

History also shows that the working class can take anything the murderous bosses dish out. The main danger comes from within, in the form of political and ideological concessions to capitalist values that in turn lead to practical betrayals, often despite the best of intentions. The only guarantee against this disaster is a Party that wins many millions of workers to join it and build communism. This is the core of the communist state apparatus.

In other words, our class here and worldwide should expect a very long-range future of sharpening and widening struggle. The transfer of power from the bosses to our class will take many years and much blood and sweat. We must never retreat on the principle of working-class dictatorship of and by communists. This lesson has cost too many working-class lives for us to abandon it now or at any time in the future. It's a hard lesson, but it holds the key to the future of the working class and humanity.✪

Union Hacks Opened Door For Bush Re-Election

continued from front page

in Latin America, Asia and Africa — and currently supporting the racist "war on terror."

Communists understand that politics are in command, that class consciousness cannot be built by pro-capitalist union hacks. The level of class consciousness among U.S. workers is lagging. But, things can change. When PLP began in the early 1960s, workers and students here were considered "backward," anti-communist, racist, etc. Similar to today, reactionary groups, many led by liberals, ruled the roost. Suddenly, the anti-war movement grew, along with the civil rights anti-racist movement.

Many people joined PLP because it was in the vanguard of many of those struggles: from the first public anti-Vietnam war march in NYC to playing an important role in the Harlem Rebellion, the first of many anti-racist rebellions that shook the U.S. Workers and students were politicized. In addition to the growth of these movements, mass wildcat strikes erupted like the 1970 national postal walkout. The reactionaries were set back, including racist KKK thugs, whose attempts to spread their racist filth were fought by tens of thousands throughout the U.S., many led by PLP.

Of course, the '60s were different. Although the Soviet Union had already sold out, the Cultural Revolution in China and the fighting Vietnamese workers and peasants inspired millions worldwide. Today, one can hardly be inspired by the Islamic zealots fighting the Christian fascists who rule the White House, but the class struggle will sharpen. In contrast to the '60s, the U.S. now is an imperialist power in decline, and must intensify its attacks on its own workers to pay for its endless wars. It's up to us, not the union hacks and their collaborators, to turn reactionary-minded workers into class conscious fighters for their class interests.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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Students Drive Marine Recruiters Off CCNY Campus

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 15 — Last week we drove Marine recruiters off the City College campus, located in the middle of Harlem, a black and Latin working-class neighborhood. Military recruiters are on the prowl more than ever to recruit working-class youth to fill the shortage of troops needed by the U.S. ruling class to fight their imperialist wars.

Two weeks before, the recruiters had set up a table in our campus's main lobby, which we discovered only when they were leaving. One comrade cleverly asked them when they would return. "Next week, same time, same place," they replied. We immediately prepared our friends and other students on campus for their next visit.

When the recruiters arrived and put up their table. We set up another table right beside them, circulating a petition for fellow students to sign if they opposed military recruitment on campus and to bar them from the school. Over 100 signed in less than a half hour and took our CHALLENGES as well as a leaflet debunking myths spread by the military. We led people in chanting, "Hey recruiters, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide!" and "Exxon, Mobil, BP, Shell, take your war and go to hell!"

After only 20 minutes, the two Marines started packing up their table. Then we started chanting, "The students, united, will never be defeated!" Students standing nearby joined the chant.

NEWARK, NJ—Demonstrators in front of an Army Recruiting office. See page, 6.

Afterwards, we had a brief discussion with some fellow students who were interested in forming a campus anti-war/anti-military recruitment group. We also plan to go after the administration for allowing recruiters on campus and will protest at the neighborhood recruiting office.

The following week the recruiters failed to show, so we sold CHALLENGE and made speeches exposing the massacre in Fallujah.

The past several weeks have been filled with modest success but we understand it takes one step to start a journey. We realize that the students were with us; by intensifying our efforts in developing closer ties with them and working through our student clubs, we can win these students to our revolutionary politics.✪

Who's Dying in Iraq?

Who are the young men and women dying in the massacre at Fallujah, or in Mosul, Baghdad and the rest of Iraq? American or Iraqi they have a lot in common. Jeffrey Lam, the child of Chinese immigrants, lived in Queens before joining the Marines.

He went to Bronx Science H.S., Pace University. He, like many others, has been described as a nice kid who had friends, did well in school. Then he joined the Marines because he was won to fighting in this imperialist war.

The Iraqi obituaries are similar, but dwarf in number the U.S. deaths. Over 100,000 innocent Iraqis have been killed, at a greater rate because the U.S. has more firepower.

The New York Times interviewed a low-level insurgent commander, who described their strategy in Fallujah. After deciding how many of their forces to save, they leave those wanting to become martyrs to draw the U.S. into a fight, and use the mounting civilian casualties to build anti-U.S. sentiment.

The Times described a wounded father in Falluja pleading for medical help from the U.S. soldiers as his wife and daughter lay shot in a house. The U.S. had attacked hospitals because they didn't want the doctors reporting the civilian casualties.

It is the sons and daughters of the working class who are being slaughtered in a cynical war to control the flow of oil.

The insurgent strategy is working to some degree. As expected, U.S. rulers are more than willing to kill tens of thousands of civilians. Fighting has now flared up all across Iraq. But there are also some signs in the U.S. military of soldiers becoming disillusioned with war. These flickers of consciousness need to be kindled. Soldiers who reject the bosses' orders need all the support we can organize, and need our politics to see there is an alternative to capitalism's butchery.✪

GI Somewhere in Iraq

U.S. Army Traps Poor Workers in Rich Man's War

It is hot here in Iraq during the day. Today, my duty involves waiting for some TCNs (Third Country Nationals) hired to move some drums used by GIs to empty their guns. Two soldiers can do it in half an hour, but the war machine gives a million-dollar contract to a private contractor. The latter farms out the work to a subcontractor who in turn hires workers mainly from Pakistan, India and Nepal to do the job for very low pay.

Another story (of thousands here): Alam is a 22-year-old Nepalese man who came to Iraq because he was offered a job — the only job he could find — as an office worker in a Kuwait cafeteria. His dream ended there. He didn't know he was headed for Baghdad, not Kuwait, being part of the first group of TNCs to enter Iraq with the U.S. Army when the invasion began in 2003. He was to work in camps set up by the invading army.

Alam had only two options: either work in these camps or return to Nepal paying his own way. During the first weeks in Baghdad all he heard every second was missiles, shootings and explosions. After a month working in one of Saddam's palaces seized by the U.S. Army, a young man knocked on the front door in the building where he was living to ask for something to eat. When Alam came down from the second floor, he heard an explosion — the young man had blown himself up. Alam was shocked and started running and yelling: "The Americans have weapons, helmets and gas masks to protect them, I have nothing!"

Gathering his belongings and, without knowing where he was going, he asked someone to take him to Kuwait. But he ended up working at a base south of Baghdad, a relatively safer place. But he can never forget what he had seen. He couldn't leave Iraq; they had taken his passport. He's now forced to remain in the middle of a war of rich against poor, where each day a few get rich and the many get poorer.

A GI SOMEWHERE IN IRAQ

Challenge Warmakers At California College

California—This term on campus has been filled with surprises and struggles, including an exposé of the mass murder and misery that U.S. imperialism has wrought in Iraq; its relation to worsening conditions for workers and students here; and a direct challenge to military recruiting on campus. PL'ers related all this to capitalism and the need for revolution

It began with a forum on labor, education and the military, organized by a group we're involved in. To dramatize the event, we handed out 400 pages, each filled with 63 ribbons, each ribbon representing the death of an Iraqi, and posted them on a tall picket fence. They completely covered the fence. We also posted photographs of dead GI's, including personal stats and how they died. These displays had a powerful effect on people viewing them, trying to grasp the amount of destruction and misery imperialism brings to the working class.

The forum's speakers linked the current imperialist war to conditions here. Hotel and other workers talked about cutbacks they're facing and a possible strike. One worker was fired for union activity, exposing the bosses' drive to maintain profits against rebellious workers. Military speakers outlined the miserable V.A. benefits and educational grants, which they're still waiting for. The speakers had a lot in common — we're all working class!

We passed around an address, urging people to write their support to the families of the 18 soldiers in the 343rd company who refused to carry out orders — more working class solidarity. We discussed the sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry and the vital role soldiers play in resisting imperialism; these workers in uniform have the power to stop the war machine in its tracks through rebellions. They need worker/student support. A person in the audience declared that a system based on greed for a few, exploitation and war can only be ended with revolution for workers' power.

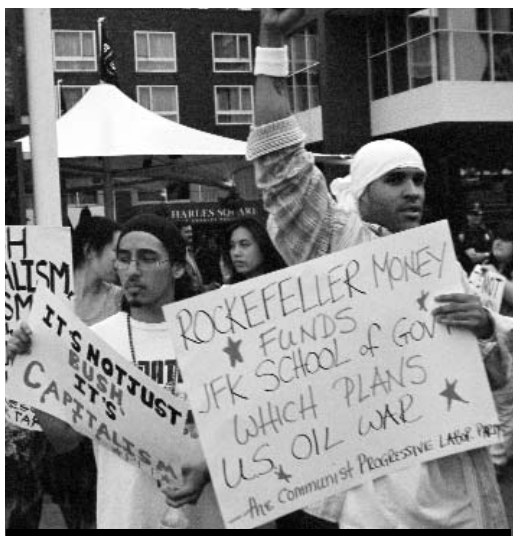
Weeks later we challenged the presence of military recruiters on our campus. They gradually were increasing the amount on duty, with no reaction from students. Eventually, the recruiters stepped up their presence, putting on a show with drag race cars and motorcycles. We decided to organize an immediate flash protest. We marched into the campus's main courtyard carrying banners with pictures of dead GI's while chanting, "Military recruiters off our campus!" and [the massacre in] "Fallujah means Fight Back!" Many people cheered and joined the chanting, bringing out a surprising number of students.

Then cops set up police tape around the military's luring traps. One comrade yelled, "Why are the police protecting the military so much!" In fact, students asked the same question. We explained that the cops and recruiters work for the same government and the same ruling class and that class needs more working-class people in the military because there aren't enough soldiers to keep fighting this war.

We realized we needed to specifically emphasize the need for military rebellions. Without rebellions, the war machine still runs.

The event demonstrated the power PLP has — when we organize these kinds of struggles, changes happen. If we don't do it, as we learned, nobody will. So, let's do it!✪

College PL'ers Unite Anti-war Marchers with Striking Profs



PLP'ers demonstrating against Democrats in Boston, Summer 2004

CHICAGO, IL, Nov. 3 — Tonight, the night after Bush's re-election, hundreds of people participated in an anti-war demonstration in Federal Plaza. A group of City College students under PLP's leadership, who've been active in the three-week-long teachers' strike there, linked the war and fascist Homeland Security to racist cutbacks in health and education, and offered communist revolution as the only solution. We planned to drive the point home by leading the rally to march to a "candlelight vigil" in Millennium Park, to support the strikers.

The night be-fore some of us made communist banners for the events. One read, "No Racist Cuts for War and Fascism!" The other, symbolic of the candlelight vigil, depicted a lit candle igniting a fuse to sticks of dynamite representing imperialism, education cuts and oil wars. Two arms broke their chains, one holding a copy of CHALLENGE and the other with a clenched fist. It was a long evening, but it showed the power of working collectively.

We proudly displayed both banners at the anti-war rally. While the organizers were calling for peace, we connected the war to the bosses' oil profits and homeland fascism, and attacked capitalism, not just Bush. We distributed hundreds of PLP leaflets and about 40 CHALLENGES to workers eager for a real solution to capitalism's unending wars for profit.

Then we led a break-away march to the vigil, organized by the Strike Solidarity Committee, a group of city college students and some faculty. Our banners led the march as we chanted, "Racist Cuts Mean, We Got to Fight Back! Oil Wars Mean, We Got to Fight Back!" We ignited the crowd already there to join our chants. We distributed more CHALLENGES and PLP literature to the students and striking professors, explaining that racist cuts in education, health care, pensions, and social security are financing the hundreds of billions of dollars the ruling class needs for the war in Iraq and fascist Homeland Security. As long as the bosses hold power, the needs of the working classes will never be met.

A young comrade from Malcolm X College made a speech about the necessity of fighting the system and called for communist revolution. We chanted, "The Only Solution is a Communist Revolution!" Many agreed, saying, "Yeah, it's revolution time." Out of this struggle, we made a few more contacts with students and more teachers, who are potential revolutionaries with valuable leadership experience.

We're learning how to work in mass organizations and build the Party, developing deeper, stronger relationships with old and new friends, and learning how to become better Party leaders. We're also gaining experience in collectively writing politically sharper leaflets, and in distributing and writing for CHALLENGE. We're now forming a PLP City College Club with some students close to joining the Party and with more who are interested in our ideas.✪

SF MUNI Drivers in Solidarity with Hotel Workers

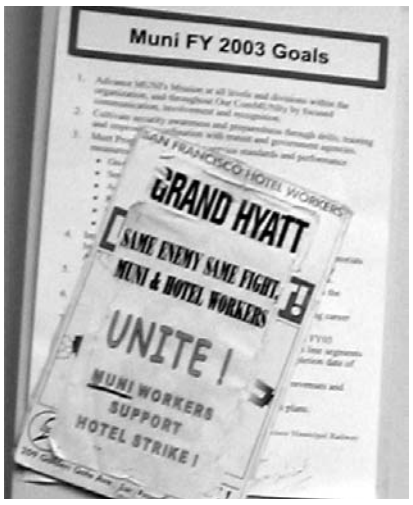
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Nov. 16 — Hotel workers in Local 2 of the UNITE-HERE union have been locked out for almost two months. Many transit workers at SF MUNI have demonstrated real class solidarity. "It's an important strike for all of us…if they lose, we all lose…I'm glad to be out here on the picket line but I wish we could do more…" At least for a day, a hotel picket sign with the MUNI solidarity poster ended up at a MUNI garage taped over a management poster.

The lockout presents many opportunities to bring a communist analysis of workers' struggles in this capitalist war economy. One driver spoke for many who recognize, "As long as scabs are in there and guests are checking in, the hotel owners won't give in." This sparked speculation about our own situation. Another said, "If we ever go out…there won't be anyone driving at MUNI...Not scabs, not supervisors…no one!" A group of us then discussed how to organize a job action, how to get enough drivers involved and how to respond to any attacks.

Some argue that Mayor Newsom is helping the workers when he threatens the owners with economic sanctions to end the lockout. Others agreed with the solidarity poster we took to the picket line: "Same Enemy, Same Fight — Muni and Hotel Workers Unite — Muni Supports Hotel Workers Fight."

The hotel owners and Newsom are basically on the same side. "Newsom's campaign got big money from the Hotel and Restaurant Associations because he ran on a platform of cutting city government. Cutting health care and layoffs is their common theme to fix the city budget and the hotels' shrinking profits."

A PLP member explained that in today's world of wars, strikes are illegal.



The bosses control the politicians, laws, police and union leadership. This is the state apparatus, which sometimes appears neutral, but is there to control the workers. This produced more debates about voting and whether "ordinary people" like us could run society.

The union leaders picked the night of the monthly membership meeting to urge drivers to picket in solidarity with the hotel workers. This was just an excuse to call off the meeting while many issues regarding our schedules and take-home pay remain unresolved. They also instructed us not to wear our uniforms, making it impossible for many drivers to participate, since most of us are in uniform 12-14 hours a day with split shifts and long commutes home. In contrast, the union and management gave us time off to vote for Kerry or Bush, in or out of uniform.

Fascism and the Patriot Act were discussed after a supervisor complained about the solidarity poster in a driver's window. One driver said, "The bosses have the technology for total control and a police state. Many people seem to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

VW Workers Victimized by Union-Boss Partnership

FRANKFURT, Nov. 3 — Volkswagen averted the first strike in its history, "promising" a seven-year job guarantee in return for a 28-month wage freeze. The 103,000 VW workers will get a one-time lump-sum payment of 1,000 euros, while the company will reduce labor costs by nearly one-third by 2011, its main objective in these talks.

Michael Fichter, a labor relations expert at the Free University of Berlin said the new contract "shows a remarkable ability to work together," and "is an example of the social partnership culture." This is university double-speak for nationalist class collaboration and the rise of fascism. It resembles what the U.S. auto industry has experienced since the 1980's.

VW pledged to invest in six plants in western Germany now that they're more competitive with low-wage factories in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and other Central European countries. But they also said they would continue to shift production outside of Germany if "the economic equation was right."

Volkswagen's union, IG Metall, gave up the demand for a 4% pay increase under the cover of "warning strikes" at several factories. The union's chief negotiator said, "We achieved our goal of securing jobs."

The new contract also cuts wages for new workers. "From now on, new employees will work on the same level as our competitors," said a company spokesman. "We never asked as much from workers as in this round of negotiations."

Volkswagen's assault on the workers follows DaimlerChrysler and GM's Opel division winning concessions on wages and work-rules, reducing labor costs. VW and Opel in particular have excess capacity in their German factories. G.M. will slash 12,000 jobs from its European work force, mostly in Germany. VW plans to eliminate its excess capacity in the next two years. That doesn't square with "job security."

The week-long wildcat strike of Opel workers in Bochum last month reflected the anger of the workers who wanted to fight for their jobs. IG Metall, like the UAW in the U.S., cynically used the wildcat to get a say in how the cutbacks would take place. The only thing the Opel wildcat "achieved" is that G.M. is now negotiating the details of the cutbacks with the union.

As the inter-imperialist rivalry sharpens between the U.S., Europe and Asia, all the liberal and "social-democratic" labor leaders will, as Lenin said before World War I, "run to the tents of their masters." Ultimately, this nationalism will lead to more fascism in the workplace and eventually, another world war. Meanwhile, PLP has an opportunity to build a revolutionary communist movement among these basic industrial workers who are tied together across all borders. That international solidarity will lay the basis for turning the next world war into the last one.✪

Home Health Aides Can Be Real Force for Working Class

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 2 — The big fight for overtime pay for home care workers is part of a bigger picture, of a half-trillion dollar war budget attacking the working class through job loss, declining wages and cutbacks in services, as well as the deaths of 100,000 Iraqis and nearly 1,200 GI's. Both presidential candidates took aim at Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare.

Home care in NY State is a big program, with about 900 home care agencies, employing 250,000 workers. (See N.Y. State Association of Healthcare Providers, Inc. 2003 report on homecare.) Medicaid serves 186,000 sick and elderly patients and Medicare serves over 176,000. Thousands more have home care through private insurance and managed-care plans. In January, Medicare recipients will suffer a 17% increase in payments deducted from their Social Security checks, and it's possible patients will be slapped with $30 co-pays for home care services. "Many patients will have to choose food or homecare," said one worker. "And these are our loved ones!"

The government, insurance companies and health care agencies favor homecare because it's cheaper than nursing home or in-patient hospital care, due mainly to the racist exploitation of home care workers. The majority are immigrant, non-white women, many ex-factory workers. They work long hours for low pay and no overtime.

Most NY State non-union home care workers earn $5.15/hr.; union rates are $6.50 to $9/hr. Many routinely work 50 to 70 hours a week with no overtime pay, or a few pennies extra, just to make ends meet. Some work 24 hours at per diem pay — which calculates to 12 hours at straight time and a night differential of $17.

Local 1199-SEIU is the biggest home-care union. The home attendant contract says there's no guaranteed work-day, -week or -year or hours of work; 24-hour-a-day workers are labeled "sleep-in" cases. They receive a per diem, not hourly, wage. Some 1199-SEIU home health aides will receive a so-called "living wage" of $10 an hour by 2007-2008 — a bandaide covering a gaping wound. Actually the union "living wage" campaign was more about electing Democrats than fighting for workers.

A home attendant working 60 hours a week, 42 weeks a year for 15 years at $8/hr. straight base pay, has been robbed of $3,360 a year in overtime pay, or $50,400 over 15 years! If working 24 hours a day, 4 days a week at $113 a day with no overtime, 42 weeks a year for 15 years, the overtime robbery is $28,000 yearly or $420,000 for 15 years!

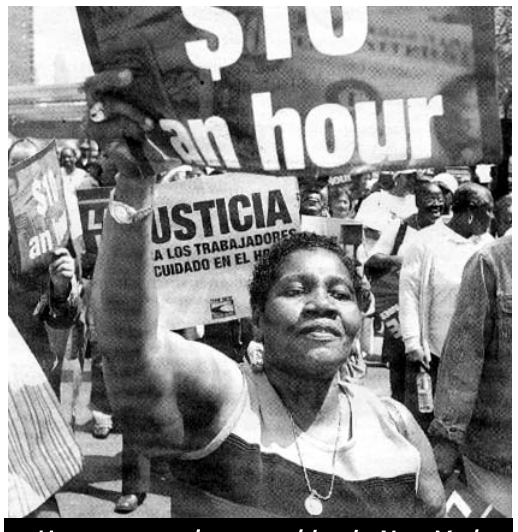
What criminal can get away with that?

The criminal is the whole capitalist system that robs and exploits workers while treating the sick and elderly like commodities and killing our children in wars for imperialist gains. It is a system that doesn't deserve to exist. "We need a revolution; I'm for that," said a Party member. "Let's fight for overtime and learn about capitalism and communism and how to prepare for revolution. The struggle is big and difficult, but the future is in our hands, if we will take it."

NY State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer is prosecuting one Brooklyn agency for "legal" overtime pay. Now some agencies are counter-attacking against the growing fight for overtime. They're telling workers that by January weekly hours will be limited to 40. A worker needing more hours can work 40 at one agency and 20 at another. A few agencies say federal money for homecare is being held up because workers are not meeting "federal standards."

Agencies may take more slave-labor Workfare workers and part-timers, who are ineligible for union membership and benefits if working less than 80 hours a month. If home care workers don't unite and fight back, conditions will worsen and all workers will be dragged down to our level. That's how racist division and exploitation work. Many home care workers are scared and have been intimidated.

So what to do? "Let's strike," said one worker. "O.K.," said another, "But let's get ready first." A rank-and-file committee is continuing to collect names on our petition — directed to NY State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and 1199-SEIU chief Dennis Rivera — calling for overtime pay and a $17 hourly wage, and for equality with workers in hospitals and nursing homes. We've distributed thousand of flyers entitled, "Stop Robbing Us" at union meetings and rallies, at the home health aides' strike last summer and at the Central Labor Council union rally at the Republican National Convention. We're organizing a rank-and-file committee to reach out to co-workers. We're making ties with union delegates committed to our cause. We've held several meetings and are planning a larger one. We want to protest in NYC and Albany.



Homecare workers marching in New York earlier in this year.

As the campaign broadens, we must be prepared for government and union efforts to co-opt, buy off and counter-attack. The best preparation involves workers becoming conscious of how the capitalist system works and who are our friends and enemies. More workers are reading CHALLENGE. A few are interested in PLP. These are the workers who are the potential core leaders. Let the fight continue! ✪

At APHA Convention:
Condemn Health Workers' Participation in Torture

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 15 — The recent convention of the American Public Health Association (APHA) passed two resolutions introduced by PLP members and friends. One condemned participation of health workers in torture, as happened at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. The other denounced the denial of public services to undocumented immigrants and the criminalization of those providing such services.

For 15 years PLP members and friends in the health field have been participating in the American Public Health Association (APHA), a group with over 50,000 members, including community and public health workers, nurses, doctors and students. We've been at every national convention, usually attended by about 12,000 people, and involved in some local chapters. PL'ers and friends are deeply integrated into several working sections and have been elected to APHA's Governing Council. We've introduced, and won passage of, resolutions opposing wars for oil and against the militarization of public health.

The resolution on torture drew the historical lesson that doctors under past fascist regimes have been won to cooperate with the State. It called for education opposing fascist ideology in health professional training. Some of the most prominent "progressive" forces in APHA opposed using the word "fascist," and even any reference to Nazi Germany. This stimulated vigorous discussion lasting several days. Ultimately, it passed easily, replacing the term "fascist" with its definition as an ideology of racism, nationalism, militarism and suppression of civil liberties.

The second resolution — condemning the denial of public services to undocumented immigrants — (which passed as a Proposition in Arizona) was rejected by the APHA leadership as "repetitious" of old resolutions. But the Governing Council demanded its reintroduction and passed it, recognizing the new heights of anti-immigrant hysteria.

Party members and friends distributed thousands of leaflets exposing fascist trends in health care, including the above issues as well as the lack of treatment for AIDS worldwide and drug company control over prices and research. We were accompanied by hotel workers, who face drastic cuts in health coverage, but whose hotels APHA patronized.

About 20 people, including new and old friends, attended our breakfast for those who wanted to fight fascism in health care. There we planned resolutions and session proposals for next year. We're hoping to sponsor a group of talks focusing on government control of health care, including the alteration of science for political ends (global warming), and the need for health workers to choose loyalty to their patients over loyalty to the State or employers. This opposes the Administration's plan for universal mental health screening, massive psychiatric drugging and anti-immigrant policies. In one city where we're active in the local chapter, a grass roots campaign against racial disparities in health care will continue.

The APHA claims it represents the progressive, activist voice in health care, and is officially in favor of a single-payer national health plan. However, even though the convention was in Washington, and many members were calling for a mass march on the capitol — which easily could have been organized after the opening session — the leadership planned only a poorly publicized demonstration on Tuesday morning, in the middle of regular business. Thus, with no publicity, only a few hundred people showed up.

The leadership emphasized lobbying Congress, not on organizing a mass movement. Although the members have passed many progressive resolutions over the years, the organization takes little or no action to implement them.

Through our long-time consistent work, we've influenced many and are highly influential with a smaller number. We struggle with them to recognize that capitalism causes the problems in health care and society and cannot be reformed away. These struggles in the APHA expose the phoniness of the liberals, who are so blinded by the rulers' "democracy" blather that they avoid struggle or uttering words like "fascism" more than they care about fighting for what the members want. ✪

APHA Members Back Hotel Workers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Hotel workers and APHA members jointly leafleted the APHA annual meeting in support of health benefits for hotel workers who are working without a new contract at the Holiday Inn and the Marriot and Hilton hotels. This activity grew out of local efforts by PLP members and friends to merge the forces of labor and public health in fighting for health care access and improved conditions of life for all workers. Soon many of the 12,000 APHA members were wearing stickers backing the hotel workers. Distribution continued at the booths of the medical care section and the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association throughout the convention.

The leafleting represented a move forward for the MWPHA in its effort to seriously fight racism and health disparities. Workers and professionals must unite in many such struggles to lay the basis for revolutionary change in the society and in health care.

Following the presidential election, many public health advocates were ready to renew the struggle for workers' health. Some joined the APHA rally for public health funding and lobbied Congress. Others protested the mayor's willingness to close D.C. General Hospital some years ago and open a baseball stadium instead, with profits flowing to the baseball owners. ✪

Muni Continued

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

be just giving up their rights out of fear."

Many workers have bits and pieces of the big picture. A communist outlook is needed to bring it all together. Consistent engagement with our co-workers on and off the job with CHALLENGE, conversations and actions, with individuals and groups, and with organized study, helps to develop this outlook. You can put the pieces of a puzzle together, but you need the picture on the box to guide you. In this lockout, our picture includes the state apparatus, profits, political economy, war and fascism. CHALLENGE often says that strikes can be "schools for communism." School is in session at MUNI. ✪

LETTERS

Airport Workers Fight Anti-Communism

At the airport where I work, we recently published the first issue of a monthly newsletter called Airport CHALLENGE, and we're taking on the anti-communist attacks from a union misleader.

Airport CHALLENGE appears in English and Spanish with a communist view of the news and political struggles. The first edition was well received, especially among regular CHALLENGE readers. Because the post-9/11 U.S. looks more like a fascist police state, we should all develop many ways to get the Party's ideas to workers.

This issue reported a political struggle within the union, exposing a right-wing shop steward who turned traitor to become a company supervisor. He is so politically bankrupt that he tries to hide his own treachery by spreading anti-communist rumors and lies on the second shop steward, a PLP member.

Anti-communism is the bosses' tool to keep workers from gaining a revolutionary perspective on who their real enemy is, the fascist bosses and their capitalist system. Anti-communism, like its evil twin racism, is used to divide communist and non-communist workers from fighting back against the bosses' racism, sexism, etc. This way capitalism is saved and the bosses continue to oppress us all. Once millions of workers embrace PLP's communist politics, nothing will save the bosses from communist revolution, not even nuclear weapons! As a wise old comrade once said, "The worst prison is the mental one workers don't know they're in." Smash anti-communism and capitalism and join PLP!

AIRPORT RED

Turn Anti-war Feelings into Anti-Imperialist Action

Recently a temporary anti-war exhibit opened in Monterey, California a few blocks from the Naval Post-Graduate School and the U.S. Army's Defense Language Institute where interpreters and interrogators are trained. Some wind up working in the torture chambers at military prisons like Abu Ghraib, Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The memorial, located in a small one acre park, consists of 1,033 individual markers mounted on four-foot stakes with biographical details on each U.S. serviceperson who died in Iraq. To truly reflect the carnage that U.S. imperialism has brought down on 100,000 Iraqis killed since the invasion in March 2003 would require an immensely larger plot of land.

Hundreds of pacifist anti-war protests like this memorial and the more militant actions like last month's 343rd Quartermaster Company GI refusal of orders are the latest welling up of something the bosses hoped was dead but is now coming back to haunt them - the Vietnam Syndrome. We must apply our communist ideas to the anti-war sentiment and pacifism while struggling against their political weaknesses as we tried to do among the millions who marched against the start of the Iraq war and the millions before who protested the ten years of the Vietnam War.

Both Bush and Kerry support U.S. imperialism's war to maintain control of Mid-East oil. While we note the rise of anti-war feeling, we continue to organize for communist revolution, not just to end a war but to eliminate the cause of war. To this end our transit club is studying the latest prescription of the bosses' Council on Foreign Relations' Peter G. Peterson to put the U.S. on a permanent war footing, and we're circulating a petition to support the rebellious GI's.

Our goal is to turn the ghost of the Vietnam Syndrome into the breathing reality of the working class, led by its communist party, PLP, driving a stake through the hearts of the capitalist rulers once and for all.

Some of us know from our own experience over the last several decades that anti-war movements and even G.I. rebellions alone cannot end imperialist war. Only organizing a movement to overthrow the cause of imperialist war - capitalism's need for greater profits, markets, and resources - will root it out.

CANARY ROW COMRADE

China-U.S. War Sooner Than Later?

This spring, I spent two weeks traveling around China, both in big cities and in the countryside. I thanked my city hosts for their hospitality, saying I would like to return the favor if they ever came to the U.S. They politely said they'd like to visit the U.S., but it's becoming impossible for Chinese citizens to obtain a visa to the U.S.

When the discussion turned to politics, I said I thought our countries would soon be at war. To my surprise, my friends sadly but wholeheartedly agreed.

In the countryside, restaurant owners, high school students and taxi drivers constantly asked me to compare China to the U.S. I asked them what they thought of the possibility of China going to war. Gravely they all said that one way or another that would happen soon.

I tried to figure out how this diverse group of people had formed this same idea. When I returned to the U.S., I read different Chinese newspapers almost daily. While most articles had the approach that the Chinese government was encouraging friendly business and cultural relations with the U.S., in July an incident occurred that answered my question.

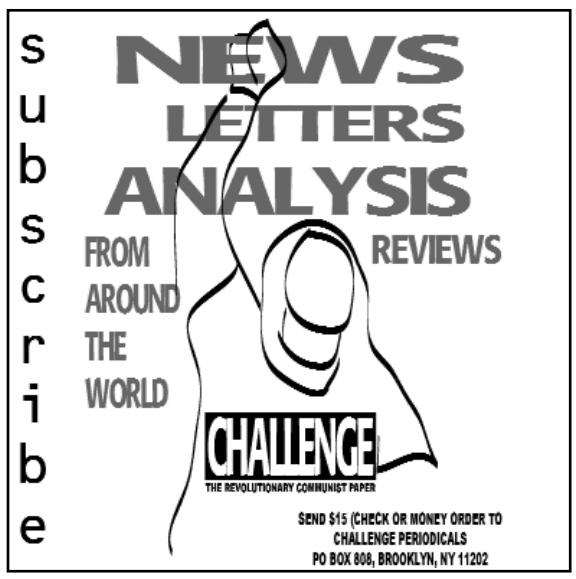
Nearly all non-American trade with China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Indonesia travels through a mile-wide channel called the Straights of Malacca. Piracy is common there. The U.S. government claimed that if pirates could board cargo ships, so could "terrorists." They announced they would send warships to the Straights to guard against "terrorism."

Within hours of that announcement, China, Indonesia and Singapore made a joint public denouncement of this "obvious plot to control 60% of China's oil imports." The three governments said in so many words that the U.S. was making a direct imperialist challenge to their countries' trade and resources and that such a direct threat was intolerable. Within two days, Singapore sent their own warships to the Straights, pre-empting any U.S. deployment.

This incident was thoroughly reported in the Chinese media as a conflict between imperialists. I was surprised to see how directly the Chinese government challenged the U.S., and how widespread the coverage was in China. With such stories on the evening news, it's no wonder most Chinese see world war on the horizon. All summer, the Chinese government has made no secret of stockpiling oil, steel and other raw materials, driving up worldwide prices.

My conversations in China and this conflict over the Straights of Malacca led me to believe that this inter-imperialist rivalry might boil over even more quickly than I had ever imagined.

A READER



Recruiters Can't Hide Death in Iraq

At the Newark, NJ election day rally at a recruiting center (see CHALLENGE, Nov. 17), our chants disrupted the recruiting process enough to have one recruiter call the cops. Before they arrived, one recruiter closed the shades in a vain attempt to shield the potential recruits from our politics. When the cops came, one recruiter weakly responded to our chants by moving the large cardboard soldier cut-outs next to the window where we were marching. One demonstrator pointed out that the soldiers dying in Iraq were made of real flesh and blood, not cardboard.

BRICK CITY COMRADE

Want College Info? Beware of Cops

I'm a NYC high school junior, and recently went to a college fair at the Javits center to get information on colleges. What I assumed would be a peaceful event filled with kids talking to college representatives, soon turned into a riot filled with kids being yelled — and arrested — by cops!

Many people showed, mostly African-American, Hispanic and Asian, so many that we were all waiting in a packed crowd outside to get in. Those in charge told us we'd have to wait. Then they let in a few people at a time, but they took in only three groups in an hour; many more were still waiting outside. Then, after letting in one more group, they told us the fair was over; we wouldn't be allowed in.

Well naturally, after waiting for an hour and a half the crowd would be angry, but we still remained non-violent.

Some people left but many stayed and began to chant, "Let us in! Let us in!" The officials continued saying there was no more room, that the colleges had "run out of information." More people left, but when many refused to go, the cops were called. About 10 showed up with some sheriffs, who explained to us how the colleges ran out of information. Then the cops yelled for us to "Get out!" They announced on a bullhorn that if we didn't leave they'd start arresting people. I began to feel I was in the twilight zone. I guess it was my first experience of a true capitalist society, arresting teens for trying to enter a college fair!

More people left after this but a good number went in. The cops barged into the crowd screaming to "get out." One cop was pushing people who wouldn't move. Then they began arresting kids. One boy was arrested for trying to go up the escalator to enter another way. A girl was arrested because she told a cop who grabbed her not to touch her. Similar arrests were made.

After the cops left, my friends and I went to the fair's exit to try to get in there; we didn't want to leave after standing for so long. But a guard stopped us, repeating the same crap the cops had told us — no information left.

When a college representative appeared, we asked them if they had any information left. She said yes, and asked why we didn't come inside. We told her what had happened. She was appalled and said she'd be glad to give us information; she had 22 boxes left!

My friends and I began asking for information from more college representatives who came out and gladly gave us brochures, pamphlets and pens, and anything else they had. We left the Javits Center with bags packed with information about many colleges.

I couldn't help thinking of all the others who had left, and the ones who were arrested — kids who came just to go to a fair, not a club or a concert, to find out about colleges. Those who got no information went home empty-handed because they were lied to and refused entry. Now why do you suppose that is?

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

Cheer Anti-war Vets At Nov. 11 Parade

The TV news broadcasts of the NYC Veteran's Day parade showed only the Armed Forces drill teams marching in flashy uniforms accompanied by military bands. There was no footage of the militant, anti-war and wheelchair vets who were demanding the U.S. get out of Iraq and bring the troops home now.

From the time our anti-war veteran's group stepped off at 26th street to the parade's end at 56th Street, we were welcomed with loud cheering, clapping, and heartfelt hugs and embraces for those of us near the barricades. A young woman yelled out, "Bring my husband home, please," to our marchers, which included the mother of a soldier in Iraq. One vet had a sign showing how many millions of dollars the CIA spent training Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.

Looking into the faces of teenagers in the crowd, I had flashbacks to my own teens, being drafted to fight in an imperialist war in Korea. The purpose of this parade was to prepare youth for a draft, which in many ways has already begun. Our Party needs to reach out to these kids so they feel supported and less isolated.

The day before I had been picketing

continued on next page

LETTERS

with the vets at the VA hospital to prevent the VA from shutting it down. Vets like these are 33% of the homeless in the U.S. They're part of a half million soldiers denied treatment for the effects of Agent Orange, a poison sprayed on people in Vietnam, and for cancer-causing depleted uranium embedded in destroyed military equipment covering much of Iraq. Over 120,000 vets are on a 6-month wait list for a doctor's appointment. Many wounded vets are housed in ancient, cold and inaccessible World War II barracks where they must walk blocks in the snow to get to an outdoor toilet.

If PLP keeps spreading our politics to future soldiers - like at recent recruitment-center rallies - about how capitalism/imperialism causes wars, we can supply the understanding these soldiers will need not only to organize against the brass, as many did in Vietnam to help stop that war, but to take it to the next level - communist revolution as the Russian soldiers did in 1917.

KOREAN WAR VET

Union 'Study' Evades Hiring of Black Workers

The activity in support of the hotel strike in San Francisco has been consistent and enthusiastic. However, the CHALLENGE article (11/17) contains an error.

All that glistens is not gold and the union's diversity clause to force bosses to hire black workers really isn't progressive. It turns out the union is demanding that the hotels hire an ombudsman to sit on a diversity committee to discuss the possibility of hiring black workers in the future, not demanding outright hiring now.

"There is an awful lot of anger," Langston Hughes used to say, "in a dream deferred." The anti-racist rebellions of the 1960s played out this story over and over again. Black workers demand immediate redress of racism; reactionaries suggest a (time-delaying) "study" of the situation.

Perhaps we could return to the picket lines with a simple demand like 10 of the next 15 workers the hotels hire must be black, a demand that strikers and their supporters could take to schools and churches asking for picketing support.

Also, we might awaken the revolutionary potential dormant in the whole working class if PLP clubs elsewhere carried the same demand to hotels in their areas. This would address the question of workers' unity in a direct and dynamic way.

Black workers joining the hotel workforce in greater numbers would counter the isolation so often felt by immigrant workers. It's demands like this that build the kind of unity we need.

We should also link the general attack on all U.S. workers stemming from the rising racism in, and the unbearable costs of, the U.S. war in Iraq to the particular situation hotel workers face here.

SF STRIKE SUPPORTER

Disabled, Home Care Workers Have Same Class Interests

A recent article, "Home Attendants 'Zoned for Slavery,'" outlines the brutal working conditions for union members who provide home health services in New York City. It's important to build class-consciousness among these workers. To do that we must put their exploitation in context: Who are the people who rely upon home health services? Why is providing the care they need valued so little? Why is more paid to perform a task in a nursing institution than in a person's home?

The folks who need home health care services are workers, their children, siblings, and parents. Whether disabled from birth, an accident, illness or old age, they're working-class folks. I live in California, but I suspect the situation is much the same all over: Low-income disabled and elderly people get care through In-Home Support Services (IHSS) which receives funding from both the federal and state governments. Washington has cut its contribution, and California, in turn, is slashing the program. This program is for poorer people; the majority of those receiving Social Security do not qualify for IHSS because their incomes are "too high."

Caring for the working class — particularly those who cannot produce — is not a big priority in a capitalist society based on profit. Both the workers who provide this vital assistance and the folks who need it are treated as expendable. They're natural allies and many disabled people know it. The latter have lobbied and demonstrated for better treatment and compensation for those who assist in their survival. When they can, they supplement their helpers' wages from their own limited resources.

Finally, why is the pay better (though not by much!) in an institution? One factor is the nursing-home industry, a powerful, profit-making group which supports laws favoring institutionalization over in-home care. Disabled workers are forced into these warehouses because they cannot get government aid to stay home in their communities. Also, where more service workers are concentrated in one place (a hospital or nursing home), they may be able to squeeze a little more out of their bosses.

DISABLED WORKER

P.S. A good source is author and commentator, Marta Russell, whose website is http//www.martarussell.com.

Vote Or Die Is a Death Threat!

One method the bosses use to control the working class is pushing nationalism. Simply put, this belief says your group of people is superior to another group of people. One example is Pan-Africanism or black nationalism, from the late 1960's up to today. The current "Hip-Hop Power" political movement under Russell Simmons, Puff Daddy and others, wants to forge a new nationalism by making Hip Hop a political force. They seek to create a Hip Hop Party as a feeder to the Democratic Party, with a Hip Hop political action summit.

Recently I attended Russell Simmons' "Get Out The Vote Concert." It said electoral politics is the answer to the oppression of the working class. The concert was squarely aimed at students, sponsored by Playstation 2 and featured Hip Hop celebrities racing video cars. The black nationalist group "Public Enemy" also appeared, as did Mary J. Blige, and other artists who appealed to youth. They all pushed voter registration and are a major part of "Hip Hop Culture," another word for Hip Hop nationalism.

The real danger came from Democratic Congressman Charles B. Rangel, who spoke along with Democrat Andrew Cuomo. When Rangel appeared, I started yelling, "No Draft!" and began informing those around me that he sponsored the draft bill recently defeated in Congress. The audience was receptive to my ideas; some participated in shouting at him. Rangel seemed visibly shaken.

Seeing Andrew Cuomo speak also suggests he might be a potential Hip Hop candidate for political office.

The amount of glitz, glamour and cash being given to the "Vote or Die" movement clearly shows the ruling class's commitment to ideologically attach students to the system. We must show that voting is like choosing between Pepsi and Coke - either way they're both soda, contain no nutritional value and will kill you if it's all you drink.

By struggling with those who came with me, leading a chant that clearly shook Rangel, and patiently building in the arts, I'm able to keep spreading our advanced political line. More Party members should enter the arts - film acting, slam poetry and writing. Every open mike, every bare stage, every homemade movie, and every music track is a potential artistic tool for recruiting to PLP. We must create Communist culture through the arts to oppose the sugary poison of the bosses' rotten "Vote or Die!" politricks being spoon-fed to the youth.

MANHATTAN COMRADE

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

Troops expose lies on Iraq

Carlos Perez quit school, left his job as a firefighter in Long Island, New York, and joined the US Marine Corps.

"To be honest, I just wanted to take revenge," said Perez, 20.

Now, two months into a seven-month combat tour in Iraq, Perez said he sees little connection between the events of September 11 and the war he is fighting….

"Sometimes I see no reason why we're here," Perez said….

Perez is hardly alone. In a dozen interviews Marines from a platoon known as the "81s"expressed in blunt terms their frustration….

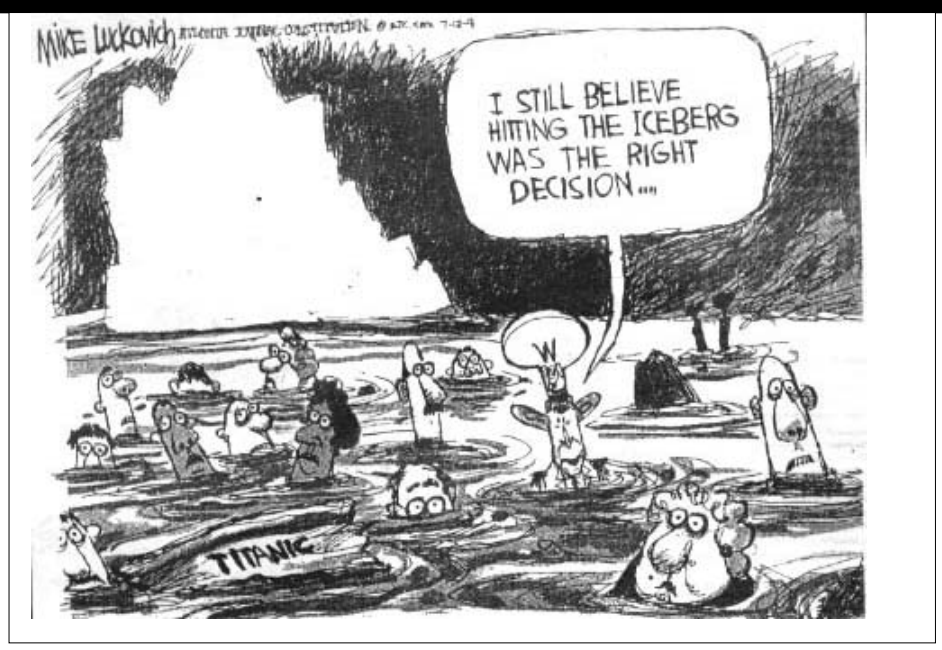
"I feel we're going to be here for years and years and years," said Lance Cpl Edward Elston, 22…. It's going to be like a Palestinian-type deal….

Several members of the platoon said they were struck by the difference between the way the war was being portrayed in the US and the reality of their daily lives….

"But when you're here, you know it's worse everyday." (GW, 10/28)

Sec'y cites US war crime

"We lucked out," Mr. McNamara, now 88…who was secretary of defense under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson….says of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. "It was luck that prevented nuclear war." Of the firebombing of Japan in World War II, and his boss, Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, he recalls: "LeMay said that if we'd lost the war, we'd all have been prosecuted as war criminals. I think he's right." (NYT, 11/6)



Public anger hits US allies

Hungary announced Wednesday that it would withdraw its 300 troops from Iraq….

Many governments face increasing public opposition to the war….

Spain's Socialist government withdrew its 1,300 troops after it swept into power last March…. The Dominican Republic withdrew 302 soldiers, Nicaragua 115 and Honduras 370. The Philippines withdrew its 51 in July….Norway withdrew 155 military engineers….

Poland, the fourth largest contributor, with 2,400 troops, says it intends to withdraw by the end of next year, and the Netherlands, with 1,400 troops, said this… rotation of troops would be its last contribution to Iraq.

New Zealand is withdrawing its 60 engineers and Thailand said it wanted to bring home its 450 troops. Singapore has reduced its contingent to 33. (NYT, 11/4)

Profits outrank death risk

Merck and federal officials should have withdrawn the painkiller Vioxx from the market as early as 2000 because studies of the drug had clearly shown that it doubled the risk of heart attacks among users, according to a study released yesterday by The Lancet, a British medical journal….

"Vioxx, Merck and the F.D.A. acted out of ruthless, short signed and irresponsible self-interest," wrote Richard Horton, editor of The Lancet. (NYT, 11/5)

US backed Iran despotism

Like most observers, Mr. Pollack sees the 1953 coup against Mohammad Mossadegh as a defining moment for Iranian attitudes toward America. "What is the most knotty for the United States," he writes , "is that the popular Iranian version of history portrays Mossadegh as a wildly popular prime minister forging a new, democratic Iran fully in command of its own destiny, who was overthrown by American agents to prevent Iran from achieving political and economic freedom."

"….There is a kernel of truth in it, and therein lies the rub; the United States did help to overthrow Mossadegh, and it was culpable in the establishment of the despotism of Mohammed Reza Shah that succeeded him." (NYT, 11/9)

Profits of Globalization, Mass Poverty and World War III

Between 1948 and 1995 world trade expanded from $124 billion to $10.7 trillion. During this period, no "third world" country prospered. World Bank and International Monetary Fund regulators made sure the biggest finance capitalists gained the biggest profits. "Free trade" apologists claim this is how the market operates. But there's little "free" about world trade. The current intensifying competition among the major imperialists resembles Europe in the years before World War I. In his recent book, "The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic," Chalmers Johnson documents the growth of world trade and U.S. military expansion. By September, 2001, "the Department of Defense acknowledged at least 725 American military bases outside the United States."

In his 1916 classic, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," Lenin described how industries combine to control production and the market. Industrialists depend on the biggest banks to finance their expansion and devour their competitors. "The development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still 'reigns' and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the big profits go to the 'genius' of financial manipulation."

The largest monopolists use the government, especially the military, to press their economic advantage internationally. In "The Lexus and the Olive Tree," New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman wrote, "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist….And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army." In the 83 years between Lenin and Friedman, imperialism has not changed how it functions.

The capitalists monopolize even the most fundamental necessities of life, food and water. The level of overall government agricultural subsidies in Western countries rose from $182 billion in 1995 to $362 billion in 1998. In 2002, these subsidies were six times greater than the total foreign aid from rich countries to poor. This led to dumping cereals, beef, pork, milk, butter, tomatoes and sugar on the international market. Poor countries can't compete, and stop producing many food products. Then, when milk prices rise, they have little choice but to import.

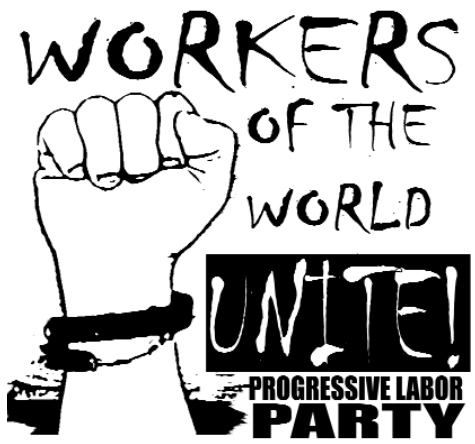
U.S.-based multinational agri-businesses also use "intellectual property rights" to extract profits from weak international competitors. For example, RiceTec, Inc., of Alvin Texas, attempted to patent a hybrid of India's basmati rice, which has been farmed for centuries. By owning patents, capitalists can charge royalties and licensing fees and even control who farms when and where. Similar behavior by pharmaceutical corporations severely restricts anti-AIDS medicines, leading to millions of preventable deaths, especially in the poorest areas of Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The continual drive for maximum profits pits the big capitalists — who dominate manufacturing, oil, finance and agriculture — into direct competition with upstart rivals or with each other, ultimately boiling over into armed conflict, as izn the Mid-East oil wars. Anticipating increasing challenges to its control of the area, the U.S. expanded its military bases in the Gulf region from one permanent base in 1990 to its current 15. Johnson concludes in his "Iraq Wars" chapter, "…the United States has been inexorably acquiring permanent military enclaves whose sole purpose appears to be the domination of one of the most strategically important areas of the world. Of course the United States has an interest in the oil in the region…"

Friedman claims U.S. imperialism and military power will bring peace and "democracy" to the Mid-East and beyond. Lenin had a different take on modern imperialism when he described it on the eve of World War I. His assessment has been borne out in the past 90 years of wars, and provides the most realistic predictions for 21st-century imperialism.

"The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist….And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army."

—Thomas Friedman, NY TIMES



Lenin and his fellow communists did not fear the gathering war clouds in 1914. They viewed history as a science. They understood that imperialist war is inevitable under capitalism, and opens the door to communist revolution.

There's no use being sad about the weather. Just prepare for it. Capitalism has existed for only a few centuries. We can make sure that the 21st Century is its last. By building a mass international PLP among workers, soldiers and youth, we can turn the next world war into communist revolution. Then workers will produce what we need, and share it.✪

From Vietnam to Iraq: The Fire Next Time

After suffering through too many pundits' post-mortems of the presidential election, it was refreshing to see CHALLENGE point the way forward with a history of GI rebellions. A good number of students, industrial workers and military families here were encouraged to read of "Red GI Off to Iraq with Red Ideas." Organizing in the bosses' armed forces is a crucial tactic to answer imperialism and, what looks like, an inevitable draft.

Unfortunately, the first paragraph on the front page "muddied the waters," in what was otherwise an extremely useful and timely series of articles. It concluded that "the army's mission will be seriously undermined" when hundreds of soldiers refused to report to duty. In my opinion, that's overblown. A nuisance, maybe even a big one, but hardly anything that would really challenge imperialism.

During the Vietnam War, tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, fled to Canada. This passive response to the war never really threatened the bosses' imperialist plans. It couldn't!

However, when hundreds of thousands of soldiers "turned the guns on imperialism," General Westmoreland, supreme U.S. commander in Vietnam, began screaming in White House meetings to withdraw before the bosses lost the whole army. The jig was up!

The third paragraph points to a much more promising course of action. It tells of the Army's 343rd Quartermaster Company's refusal to obey orders. The army has sequestered the five leaders and will probably throw the book at them in hopes of intimidating others who want to do the same — or more! At least two of these working-class leaders are black, making this a racist attack to boot.

During the Vietnam War, the Army employed similar intimidation tactics, most notability in the case of Private Billy Dean Smith. The brass wanted to convict Smith of fragging, blowing up an officers' barracks with a fragmentation grenade, the first case of its kind. They hoped white GIs would not rush to the aid of this African-American. In answer, our Party launched a campaign against this racist attempt to intimidate soldiers. So did others. I personally helped organize a demonstration of a few hundred supporters in a city near where I was stationed. In the end, Smith was freed and the GI movement grew.

It's a shame our Party did not have more members in the bosses' military at that time. The rebellion in the armed forces was a mass movement, but it lacked sufficient revolutionary communist leadership. The sharper we are on this question, the more prepared we will be for "the fire next time."

RED VETERAN

Anti-Imperialist Action Is Cure For Election Blues

Despite all the disillusionment after the election, when students and workers are offered a real alternative to the crass opportunism and reformism of "anybody-but-Bush" liberals in the form of anti-imperialist and communist ideas, they respond — with their fists in the air! My campus has traditionally had a reputation for its apathy and conservatism when it comes to politics and political practice. Yet, two recent events organized by the student-led anti-war group within which I've been base building have revealed a very different campus. A recent forum on the possibility of a military draft in the near future for US youths and an emergency demonstration against the offensive in Fallujah have shown me not only how receptive students and workers are to leftist and communist ideas and criticisms, but also how willing they are to participate in political actions that take a strong anti-imperialist stance against the racist and fascist abuses of the US ruling classes.

Students sat on the floor and crowded at the doors after the 100 available seats were all taken, eager to listen to the presentation and engage in discussion over a future draft.

Over 130 students attended our forum on the potential reinstatement of a military draft in the U.S. Students sat on the floor and crowded at the doors after the 100 available seats were all taken, eager to listen to the presentation and engage in discussion over a future draft. Many important points were made, including that we already have a back-door draft in the form of an "economic draft" and the Bush administration's stop-loss policy. The U.S. need to wage endless imperialist wars to maintain its global domination means that the ruling class will need more "boots on the ground" to fight their profit wars. With enlistment down and resistance in the military beginning to become apparent, the US rulers will have no option but to draft working-class men and women to carry out their warmongering imperialist murderous plans. Many students were open to our ideas, agreeing that electoral politics will never end the atrocities of capitalism and its perpetual wars for profits. The need to build an anti-imperialist social movement, made up of workers, students and soldiers, was accepted as the only real solution to the evils and injustices of monopoly capital.

A large number of students were very excited and motivated by the ideas and arguments put forward at our forum, and began to come to our weekly meetings. The recent offensive in Fallujah, begun less than a week after the election, allowed us to channel this motivation into an emergency demonstration on our campus against the military escalation in Iraq with its mass slaughter. Surprisingly, we were able to plan a rally and march within twenty-four hours. At the rally, we distributed over 400 leaflets linking the imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to the cutbacks in education and health care, to attacks on workers' wages and pensions, and to the growing problems faced by students and workers here in the US. The rally brought out students, campus workers and even some professors. Speeches were made that outlined the real reasons for the US ruling class' war in the Middle East: the need to control Middle Eastern oil reserves and commercial markets to ward off potential imperialist rivals and maintain global hegemony. More importantly, the rally demonstrated that even on a supposedly conservative campus like mine, students and workers are willing to voice dissent and build resistance when presented with the truth.

The forum and especially the demonstration have brought my friends closer to PLP and attracted a number of new student activists who I can get to know. We are planning another demonstration next week. Despite all the talk of disaffection and disillusionment after the election, the opposite is becoming clear also. When offered something other than the crass opportunism and reformism of "anybody but Bush" liberals, when offered real change in the form of anti-imperialist and communist ideas, students and workers respond—-and do so with their fists in the air!✪